

Engaging with **Islam**

SALVATION & THE DEATH OF JESUS - SESSION 12

PART 1: Preparation and Discussion

Salvation in Islam

In Islam a person is saved by Allah's mercy, however, they must earn this mercy. A Muslim can earn Allah's mercy in different ways and this leads to three paths to salvation.

Path 1: Straight to Paradise

Jihadist martyrs go straight to paradise.

If you are killed or die in God's way, pardon and mercy from God are better than what they collect. If you die or are killed, you will be gathered up to God. (Qur'an 3:157-158, Jones)

The souls, of the martyrs live in the bodies of green birds who have their nests in chandeliers hung from the throne of the Almighty. They eat the fruits of Paradise from wherever they like and then nestle in these chandeliers. (*Sahih Muslim*: 1887; bk. 20, no. 4651)

Path 2: The Grave then Paradise

Most Muslims are not martyrs and so they take a different path. They earn Allah's mercy through the religious rituals of Islam, the Five Pillars which are the confession of faith, fasting, pilgrimage, prayers, giving money to Islamic causes. When they die they go to the grave first and then hopefully to paradise later.

... the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) said: "Indeed the grave is the first stage among the stages of the Hereafter. So if one is saved from it, then what comes after it is easier than it. And if one is not saved from it, then what comes after it is worse than it." (*Jami` at-Tirmidhi*: 2308)¹

What is interesting is that a Muslim can do good deeds which will be credited to another Muslim who is in the grave.

Narrated Ibn Abbas: A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Allah's Apostle! My mother died and she ought to have fasted one month (for she missed Ramadan). Shall I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet replied in the affirmative and said, "Allah's debts have more right to be paid." ... (*Sahih al-Bukhari*: vol. 3, bk. 31, no. 174)

Path 3: The Grave then Hell then Paradise

The final way is to go to hell and then paradise.

¹ Sahih; also *Sunan Ibn Majah* 4408

Whoever said "None has the right to be worshipped but Allah" and has in his heart good (faith) equal to the weight of a barley grain will be taken out of Hell. ... (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 1, bk. 2, no. 42)

What does this view of salvation mean for talking to a Muslim? Firstly, it means that asking a Muslim if they have done enough good deeds to be saved is not the best question. Most Muslims generally believe they will go to paradise eventually even though they have not done enough good deeds. A better question is to ask which path they are you on. Show them the diagram. This question locates their lack of assurance more accurately.

Secondly, when it comes to explaining the gospel, say that when salvation is something we earn then people do indeed try many paths to earn it, but when salvation is a free gift from God there is only one path. Jesus death on the cross is what God has done to save us. There is only one way. This is God's free gift that we cannot earn only receive by faith with thankfulness.

Q1. What would you say to a Muslim who said the following:

- Hosea 6:6 says that God does not want a sacrifice for sins: "For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." (Hosea 6:6)
- Ezekiel 18:20 makes it very clear that one person cannot bear the sins of another: "The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son. ..." (Ezekiel 18:20)

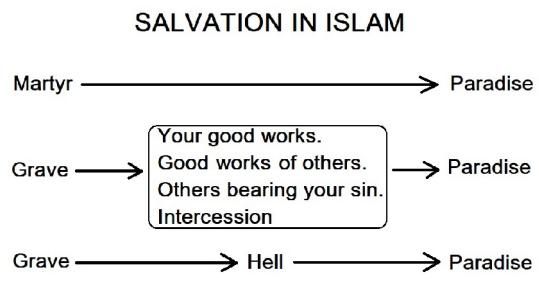
The Crucifixion in the Qur'an

They said (in boast), "We killed Jesus the Messiah, the son of Mary, the Apostle of God"; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ about this are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only assumption to follow, for of certainty they killed him not. Rather, God raised him to himself. (Qur'an 4:157-158)

It is quite common for Muslims to say, and Christian authors to teach, that the Qur'an denies the historical death of Jesus. The result of this is that a Muslim may reject the possibility of Jesus dying for our sins simply because they assume he was not crucified at all. How do we deal with this situation?

Firstly, it is important to find out what they believe about the crucifixion. Ask them. If they deny that Jesus was crucified then ask them what happened. There is no agreement among Muslims as to what happened. Here are their views.

- Someone was substituted for Jesus.
- No one was crucified. It was all a vision.
- Jesus survived the crucifixion.



<http://engagingwithislam.org/Ewl-phone-summary-slides.zip>

- It was the Romans who crucified Jesus not the Jews.
- Jesus fell asleep and his soul left his body.
- The whole crucifixion event is just a myth and false teaching.
- We do not know what happened.
- The Qur'an denies the death of Jesus as it denies the death of any martyr.

Point out that Muslims have no agreement as to what happened.

Secondly, if they continue to deny that Jesus was crucified then you will need to show that he was. There are three steps to do this.

1. Show your Muslim friend verses from the Bible which show that Jesus was crucified and died on the cross.
2. If they reject the Bible's testimony then show it from the Qur'an. The Qur'an may appear to be an outright denial of the crucifixion of Jesus but it is not because when we let the Qur'an interpret itself we see that its description of the crucifixion is in fact the description of the death of a martyr. Consider the verses again.

They said (in boast), "We killed Jesus the Messiah, the son of Mary, the Apostle of God"; but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ about this are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only assumption to follow, for of certainty they killed him not. Rather, God raised him to himself. (Qur'an 4:157-158)

In these verses the Jews are boasting of having killed Jesus but are told they did not. We see this idea elsewhere in the Qur'an, for instance, when Muhammad's soldiers were boasting of having killed Muhammad's enemies they were told they did not,

You did not kill them. God killed them. (Qur'ans, 8:17, Jones)

In the Qur'an only God gives and takes life. We can never boast of giving it or taking it. This is what we see in the Qur'an's crucifixion account. The Qur'an never says Jesus did not die, instead it says they did not kill him.

Next we are told that the crucifixion was "made to appear to them." That is, they did see a crucifixion. The Qur'an interprets this for us when it speak of the martyrs only *appearing* to be dead.

Do not say of those who are killed in the way of God, "dead". No, they are living, but you do *not perceive* [that]. (Qur'an 2:154, Jones)

Finally, in the Qur'an's crucifixion account Jesus is taken to God. Christians may assume this is the ascension, but it never says he was raised bodily, and in the Qur'an every martyr is taken to paradise, not the grave, to be with God.

If you are killed or die in God's way, pardon and mercy from God are better than what they collect. If you die or are killed, you will be gathered up to God. (Qur'an 3:157-158)

Do not reckon those who were killed in God's way as dead: No! [They are] alive with their Lord. (Qur'an 3:169, Jones)

The description of Jesus appearing to die but actually being taken to God makes sense if the Qur'an is describing Jesus as a martyr.

How do you show this to a Muslim? You need to read these verses from the Qur'an with them and show that Jesus as a martyr is a better explanation than their explanation.

3. The final step is to consider general history. All historians accept that Jesus died on the cross. There are many books that examine the historical basis for the life of Jesus, and it is worthwhile reading one of these:

- Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?*
- F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable?*
- John Dickson, *The Christ Files*. Book and DVD, www.thechristfiles.com.au

Summary: Show the death of Jesus from the Bible > Qur'an > History.

Q2. How would you answer the following? What would you say to a Muslim who said the following:

... one of the alleged witnesses, St. Mark, tells us that at the most critical juncture in the life of Jesus - "All his disciples forsook him and fled" - (Mark 14:50). Please ask your Christian friend, "Does all mean all in your language ...?" ... So the so-called "eye-witnesses" are not really eye-witnesses to the happenings ... The reason the disciples of Jesus were afraid was that they had learned by hearsay that their Master was killed by being fastened to the cross - that he was crucified. They had learned by hearsay ... that he had died. (Ahmed Deedat, *Crucifixion or Crucifix-Fiction?*, ch. 3, pp. 7-8)

PART 2: Video Presentation (21 minutes)

Note: I have changed my view on the Qur'an's teaching about the crucifixion since this video was made in 2013. My new view is what is stated above.

How can we know the death of Jesus happened?

The Gospel Accounts

General History

Muhammad's View of the Death of Jesus - Docetism

Often he (Jesus) did not appear to his disciples as himself, but he was found among them as a child. (Gospel of Judas)

But you (Judas) will exceed all of them (the disciples). For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me. (Gospel of Judas, v. 56)

The Savior said to me (Peter), "He whom you saw on the tree (the cross), glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me." (The Apocalypse of Peter)

A Sacrifice for Sin

Ezekiel 18:20 - A sacrifice for sin: Ezekiel 16:62-63, 40:39, 42:13, 44:29, 45:17, 25.

Union in Islam

Adam in Islam, Qur'an 7:22-25, 7:172, 20:115, Sahih al-Bukhari: Vol. 4, bk. 55, no. 551.

Fasting: Narrated Ibn Abbas: A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Allah's Apostle!

My mother died and she ought to have fasted one month (for she missed Ramadan). Shall I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet replied in the affirmative and said, "Allah's debts have more right to be paid." ... (Sahih al-Bukhari: vol. 3, bk. 31, no. 174)

They will bear their own burdens in full on the Day of Resurrection, and also of the burdens of those whom they misled without knowledge. Evil indeed is that which they shall bear! (Qur'an 16:25, Hilali-Khan)

Narrated Abu Musa: Allah's Messenger said: On the Day of Resurrection, my Ummah (nation) will be gathered into three groups. One sort will enter Paradise without rendering an account (of their deeds). Another sort will be reckoned an easy account and admitted into Paradise. Yet another sort will come bearing on their backs heaps of sins like great mountains. Allah will ask the angels though He knows best about them: Who are these people? They will reply: They are humble slaves of yours. He will say: Unload the sins from them and put the same over the Jews and Christians; then let the humble slaves get into Paradise by virtue of My Mercy. This Hadith is sound and mentioned in Mustadrak of Hakim. (*110 Ahadith Qudsi*, trans.: Syed Masood-ul-Hasan, pp. 19-20.)

Tawassul & Istighatha - The intercession of those, dead or alive, who because of their righteousness are able to intercede for you before Allah. (Ahmad ibn Naqib al-Misri, *Reliance of the Traveller - A Classic Manual of Islamic Sacred Law*, pp. 933-934)

Common questions

BIBLE				QUR'AN
Old Testament		New Testament		Muhammad
Torah	Prophets	Psalms	Gospel	
<----- c. 1500 years ----->				23 years
Humanity is created in the image of God.				No
The Fatherhood & Son of God				No
God comes to dwells with his people.				No
Humanity is corrupted by sin.				No
Priesthood & Sacrifice of Atonement for Sin				No
Covenants of Noah, Abraham, Moses, & David				No
One Story of Redemption				No

Why do good works?

Narrated Imran bin Husain: A man said, "O Allah's Apostle! Can the people of Paradise be known (differentiated) from the people of the Fire; The Prophet replied, "Yes." The man said, "Why do people (try to) do (good) deeds?" The Prophet said, "Everyone will do the deeds for which he has been created to do or he will do those deeds which will be made easy for him to do." (i.e. everybody will find easy to do such deeds as will lead him to his destined place for which he has been created). (Sahih al-Bukhari: vol. 8, book 77, no. 595)

God does not want a sacrifice: Hosea 6:6 and Psalm 51:16.

We are born pure and not corrupted by sin.

Paul invented Christianity

God just forgives and does not need a sacrifice. Allah does not just forgive; you must do good works. God determines how to approach him and all the prophets say it is through a sacrifice of atonement.

PART 3: Discussion

Q3. Do you have any comments about the video?

Further Reading: <http://answering-islam.org/Green/union.htm>

This is the end of the Engaging with Islam course. If you have found this material helpful please consider making a donation towards the ongoing development of this material. Visit the donation page at <http://engagingwithislam.org/contact-donations/>

Answers

Q1a. Hosea 6:6 is rebuking hypocrisy not cancelling the temple and sacrifices.

Q1b. Ezekiel 18:20 is teaching that each individual is responsible for their repentance it is not denying the need for atonement. The sacrifice of atonement is taught in Ezekiel 16:63, 40:39, 42:13, 44:29, 45:15-25.

Q2. The disciples did witness the death of Jesus: Mark 14:50-54, Luke 23:33-49, John 19:16-27.

What to do next?

Now that you have completed this course you may be thinking about what to do next? Here are some suggestions:

- Love God, keep growing as a Christian and learn your doctrine.
- Keep talking to Muslims.
- Join a mission team that is ministering to Muslims.
- Run the *Engaging with Islam* course yourself at your church or university.
- Read some of the recommended books.
- Get familiar with the *Answering Islam* website.
- Request that the persecuted church be regularly prayed for at your church and provide the information for those who pray.